

Fall 2014
Illinois State University

HIS 261, SECTION 1: HISTORY OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES TO 1865
MWF 11:00-11:50 in Schroeder 206

This course is a core requirement for the Women's and Gender Studies Minor *

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns, 305 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice)/438-8620 (TDD).



Instructor: Dr. Kyle Ciani
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Office hours: M & W 12:00 – 1:30 pm or by appointment

Students do not need to make an appointment with me if you are visiting during my scheduled office hours.

Textile Spinners, c. 1860s (University of Massachusetts, Lowell).

NATURE OF THE COURSE

This course will present the American experience to 1865 from a woman-centered perspective. A full integration of women and gender into historical processes transforms the scenes in which we understand change over time. Social regulations surrounding sexuality, religious observation, property ownership and political representation explain why communities engaged in armed conflict, banishment or taxation to solve problems. We will pay particular attention to how race, ethnicity, religious observation, age, financial status, and home region defined a woman's ability to maneuver in society. While we will focus on the affects these institutions had on women, we cannot ignore that women lived in communities with men. Thus, this course recasts history to include the everyday happenings among and within all members of a family and its communities.

* The minor in Women's and Gender Studies enhances any undergraduate major by integrating a working knowledge of gender issues with the student's field(s) of study. Women's and Gender Studies employs gender as an analytical category, along with race, class, ethnicity, ability, age, nationality, and transnationality to focus on women's contributions to society and the gender implications of cultural, political, and economic processes. For information on how to apply visit: <http://womensandgenderstudies.illinoisstate.edu/programs/undergrad.shtml>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 40% Two in-class, no notes essay exams on course material (each worth 20%)
- 20% One 6-7 page analytical essay on the Crane monograph
- 15% One in-class group project on the Hodes monograph
- 15% Participation and engagement in course (includes periodic reading responses)
- 10% One 3-4 page assessment on a public talk or exhibit (guidelines attached)

- Student success in this course will be based on the quality of oral and written assignments, and integrity in the classroom (active and collaborative participation). Students can count on me to create a respectful environment that invites diverse positions and where students can safely voice opinions, work through ideas, and present their findings. I have absolutely no patience for students who roll their eyes, smirk, or sigh loudly when a student makes a comment; if you disagree with a comment, please engage in debate in a respectful tone and thoughtful manner. This is not talk radio or reality television so we won't be yelling at or over each other.

- Syllabus, Course Handouts, and Assignments will be posted on ReggieNet and distributed in class. Announcements will be posted in ReggieNet and sent via students' iLSTU ulids. Please use keciani@ilstu.edu when sending me a message and do use the ReggieNet e-mail system. Also, when sending me an e-mail about this course, please put HIS 261 in the Subject line to help me maintain an organized semester.

- I will read and answer e-mails within a day of viewing them when received during standard business hours (M-F, 8 am to 5 pm). Please keep in mind that I have a personal life and do not hang out on my computer waiting for students to contact me. For example, if you e-mail me at 2 am on a Tuesday, you should not expect a response before 9 am class on the Wednesday. The same standard applies to any voice mails you leave on my office phone.

- FYI: my office phone, (309) 438-8062 is not designed for text messages. If you need to contact me, you need to dial the number and leave an actual voice mail message if I am not there to answer it in person.

- I don't offer "Extra Credit" nor do I accept late work. A missed assignment receives zero credit.

- Plan to turn in your assignments at the beginning of class on the due date. If you need an extension for a legitimate excuse (i.e. planned or emergency surgery), you must contact me ahead of time and make arrangements. Personal vacations DO NOT constitute legitimate excuses. Turn in work early if you see a conflict with your schedule.

- Attending class is a minimum requirement; as adult students you make your own decisions about juggling schedules/priorities. Please do so in a responsible manner for history has shown that absences negatively affect student performance.

- Student Athletes/Academic Team members should provide me with a letter from your coach/team academic counselor regarding absences due to university approved travel for games/tournaments. Please do so as soon as possible so that necessary accommodation can be arranged. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements, not mine.

REQUIRED READINGS

- Crane, Elaine Forman. *Witches, Wife Beaters, & Whores: Common Law and Common Folk in Early America*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Hodes, Martha. *The Sea Captain's Wife: A True Story of Love, Race and War in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006.
- Moynihan, Ruth Barnes, Cynthia Russett & Laurie Crumpacker, eds. *Second to None: A Documentary History of American Women, Part I to 1865*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.

Second to None will serve as our basic reader for the course, and we will generally read a chapter each week from it. The other two monographs analyze how various ideologies defined women's lives in the colonial and antebellum periods, and students will read each book and complete an assigned project for each. Books are available for purchase, for use in Milner Library through the Reserve Desk, or through the Interlibrary Loan System.

CLASS ENVIRONMENT

It pains me to have to do so, but experience has taught me that it is necessary to list the following common courtesy rules for our classroom. Please use them the entire semester.

- Plan to arrive by 8:55 so you are ready for class when it begins at 9 am. Likewise, plan to stay until 9:50 am. Please let me know if a circumstance arises that prevents you from following this rule.
- Turn off all non-class electronics when class begins and put them away. You will not need to text, e-mail, access social media, or use the Internet during our class time. If your laptop becomes more than a note-taking device, I will ask you to leave our classroom.
- Focus on our class. It is very distracting (and rude) when students update calendars and complete assignments for other courses during class, so please don't do it.
- Do not eat your breakfast, lunch or dinner in class and use caution with all beverages. Please be mindful of mishaps; if you spill something, please clean it up yourself.
- Do not use tobacco products of any kind in class.
- Please abide by the medical advice given to you by medical personnel regarding contagious issues.
- Please be aware that sometimes students share Too Much Information (TMI) about their personal situations in class. This is an intellectually challenging class and not a reality show, so if I recognize that a comment is leading toward inappropriate territory, I will respectfully turn the conversation down a new path.

GRADING SCALE

- Work you do in this course will be held to college-level standards. Papers with spelling and grammatical errors, unorganized or unintelligible theses, or unsupported opinions will not receive a grade higher than a C. I will brainstorm with students, review outlines, and read rough drafts (I will not edit papers) if students allow enough time up front for that involvement. I encourage you to take advantage of skills development programs offered by the University and plan to take time with improving upon your reading and written analysis.
- Always do your own work, both in our classroom and for assignments prepared outside of class. Evidence of your cheating will result in your failure of the course.
- The following guidelines will be followed to evaluate student work in this course:

A = 90-100%

Excellent

Assignment demonstrates excellent analysis that accurately includes lecture material, course readings and ideas generated during the course; is free of errors in all facets, including typos, grammar, and spelling; and demonstrates an accurate understanding of course content. Well written, clear, thorough, and typically interesting. Concepts are placed in an accurate historical context (when, where, why, how, who, and how those characteristics figure together). Work is always a thoughtful articulation of the material.

B = 89.9-80%

Above Average

Assignment demonstrates above average analysis that accurately includes lecture material, course readings and ideas generated during the course; is generally free of errors in all facets, including typos, grammar, spelling, and course content. Work shows a concerted effort to understand the issues but does not always accurately reflect course content. A strong attempt is made to place concepts in an accurate historical context, but some elements of that context may be wrong.

C = 79.9-70%

Average

Assignment demonstrates the minimum: directions generally followed and lecture material and/or course readings generally included in the response. Little to no analysis of the content; rather, assignment merely repeats a fact from the reading or lecture and does not place the fact into a historical context. Typos, misspelled words, and/or poor grammar are present throughout the assignment.

D = 69.9-60%

Below Average

Assignment does not follow directions; lecture material and/or course readings ignored or overlooked in the response; little to no analysis of the content; no attention historical context; typos, misspelled words, and/or poor grammar are present throughout the assignment.

F = 59.9 and below

Assignment does not follow directions; inaccurate and/or absent content.

WEEKLY PLAN

Plan to have the assigned reading completed by the Friday of each week. I may ask you to respond in writing as homework or in class as a quiz to the week's query, and we will always have a class discussion about themes in the reading. Students need to read the material and not depend on me to summarize it for you. Students should also get in the habit of taking written notes pinpointing key themes, people, or activities. We'll work on this skill throughout the semester.

Following is a week-by-week plan of the semester. Please note that the plan may change a bit—if we need more time on a topic, we'll take it—but it will not change dramatically. So, students need to hang onto this syllabus, and USE it to manage your time.

Week 1: August 18, 20, 22 — Introduction to the Histories of Women and Sources

Themes: Interpreting historical sources; Challenges in the discipline

Readings: *Second to None*, Preface & General Introduction

Query: How do attitudes regarding gender roles influence interactions in societies?

Week 2: August 25, 27, 29 — Gender Encounters in the Americas

Themes: "New World" Cultures and European Perceptions

Readings: *Second to None*, 11-44

Query: How did European (and mostly male) perceptions define an "American" identity?

Week 3: Sept. 1*, 3, 5 — Building Colonial Communities

Themes: Regional Differences in Labor, Family and Religious Ties

Readings: *Second to None*, 45-74. Begin reading *Witches, Wife Beaters & Whores*

Query: Did women living in the colonies share any common experiences?

* Labor Day holiday – no class

Week 4: Sept. 8, 10, 12 — Colonial Change

Themes: Gendered Prescriptions and Expectations

Readings: *Second to None*, 75-97. Continue reading *Witches, Wife Beaters, & Whores*

Query: Could colonial women survive and thrive independent of male support?

Week 5: Sept. 15, 17, 19 — Legal Positions

Themes: Importance of Economic & Marital Status

Readings: Finish reading *Witches, Wife Beaters, & Whores*

Query: How did colonial women react to roles prescribed to them by their societies?

Week 6: Sept. 22, 24, 26 — Repercussions of Change

Themes: Influences of armed conflict & expansion of slavery

Readings: *Second to None*, 101-122.

Query: How did society react to status changes among women in their communities?

DUE: Essay on *Witches, Wife Beaters, & Whores*— Monday, September 22

Week 7: Sept. 29, Oct. 1, 3 — Transformation of Colonial Ideologies

Themes: The Enlightenment and Great Awakening

Readings: *Second to None*, 123-151

Query: Why did certain cultural and intellectual movements affect some women so dramatically while being ignored by others?

Week 8: Oct. 6, 8, 10 — Review

DUE: In-Class Essay Exam, Friday, October 10

Week 9: Oct. 13, 15, 17 — Revolutionary-era Women

Themes: Regional, Ideological, and Racial Differences

Readings: *Second to None*, 153-180

Query: Did the Constitution address the concerns of all peoples living in America?

Week 10: Oct. 20, 22, 24 — Republican Spaces

Themes: Women's Roles in the Expanding Nation

Readings: *Second to None*, 181-204

Query: Why did notions such as companionate marriage evolve during this time?

Week 11: Oct. 27, 29, 31 — Expanding the Nation

Themes: Women's Work in the Market Economy

Readings: *Second to None*, 207-238; Begin *Sea Captain's Wife*

Query: How did women begin to expand their "sphere" through use of public zones?

Week 12: Nov. 3, 5, 7 — Controlling Freedoms and Human Rights

Themes: Understanding the Integrations of Free, Enslaved, and Slave-owning Women

Readings: *Second to None*, 293-358; Continue *Sea Captain's Wife*

Query: How does our understanding of the institution of slavery change when women entrenched in the system become the center of analysis?

Week 13: Nov. 10, 12, 14 — Women and Reform

Themes: Origins of Feminism

Readings: *Second to None*, 241-262

Query: How did the activism extended by women differ from that of male leaders?

Week 14: Nov. 17, 19, 21 — Migrations

Themes: Affects of "frontier" expansions and urban migrations on women and families

Readings: Finish *Sea Captain's Wife*

Query: How did territorial expansion limit women's social and cultural authority?

DUE: In-Class Group Project on *Sea Captain's Wife* — Wednesday, Nov. 19

Week 15: Thanksgiving Vacation — Nov. 24 - 28

Week 16: Dec. 1, 3, 5 — Realities of Woman's Spheres and Review for Exam 2

Themes: Sexuality and Respectability

Readings: *Second to None*, 263-292

Query: How did turmoil in the mid-nineteenth century influence women's abilities to provide for themselves and their families?

DUE: Last day to hand in your Public Talk/Exhibit Assessment — Mon., Dec. 1

Week 17: Exam 2 - This date/time is assigned by the University.

I will notify students as soon as we receive our assignment. Please be aware that it may not fall on a Monday/Wednesday/Friday at 11:00 am.

GUIDELINES FOR YOUR ASSESSMENT OF A PUBLIC EVENT

Each student will attend one public event and write a 3-4 page reflective assessment of that event. I recommend you hand in your assessment within one to two weeks of attending the event while the material is fresh in your mind; however, the last day I will accept an assessment is Monday, December 1 by 11 am. The event may be a talk by a professional or intellectual, an activist workshop, an agency symposium, a theater or dance performance, or a museum exhibit. **The event must have issues central to women's lives as its focus.** For example, a female biologist presenting a colloquium on supernova is NOT a legitimate event for this assignment but a male poet reciting his pieces on female gendered identity would be appropriate.

The assignment requires you to move out of the classroom and experience a public event in person. Virtual museums, Social media performances, or events offered to closed communities are not acceptable. Hundreds of public events are offered on the ISU campus every semester and many of these are free or students receive a discounted ticket price. So this assignment does not require you to spend money. Also, your choice of event does not have to be at ISU so if you are a commuter, you may want to check into events held in your community. Feel free to ask me before you attend something if it is appropriate. I won't know everything that is being offered, but I will be able to make a judgment call on the appropriateness of the event.

For your 3-4 page (typed & double-spaced) reflective assessment, please use the following format:

1. At the top of the assessment provide the name of the talk or performance; the deliverer(s) of that talk; when and where delivered/performed. In the case of a museum exhibit, provide the name of the exhibit as well as the museum in which it is installed. These details are important documentation that must be included in your assessment.
2. Attach a document that indicates you were in attendance such as a ticket stub or handout from the talk. Take initiative to ask for or to track down such a document: think of it as a primary source that records the history of the activity. All legitimate public talks are publicized (often on websites) so print the advertisement as your documentation if it is a free talk with no handouts.
3. Provide a basic description (1-2 paragraphs, not the entire assessment) of the event.
4. Spend the bulk of your assessment (at least 2 pages) reflecting on what you learned from this experience. For instance: Did the activity introduce new ideas or subjects to you? Is the forum (for instance a theatre presentation) a new way of learning for you? If so, how does it differ from a standard question and answer lecture format? Assess the significance of these new ideas, subjects, or learning methods in terms of how we are learning about women's history. Consider the conversations we've held concerning re-thinking primary sources and asking new questions of old sources. Think "outside the box" on this assessment.
5. This assessment is not an exercise in audience critique. It is not valuable for me to know that the speaker "was boring." "Get over it" will always be my response. We are here to learn and most speakers are not actors, comedians, or politicians. You are not assessing the way they deliver the material but rather the ideas and how this information touched your intellect.